

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of searching for information on a computer information network comprises providing a searchbase comprising a plurality of descriptive packets, wherein each packet is associated with one of a plurality of information sources published on a computer information network and includes a query language and template usable therewith, a sending protocol usable therewith and a receiving protocol usable therewith. A search request is received over the computer information network from a user for retrieving information from the plurality of information sources in accordance with given search criteria. The search request is transformed into an inquiry capable of searching the searchbase and the searchbase is searched with the inquiry to identify any of the plurality of information sources which potentially meet the given search criteria. The search request is transformed into queries for the identified information sources, wherein each query is in accordance with the query language and query template in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source and the queries are sent over the computer information network to the identified information sources in accordance with the sending protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source. Information is received over the computer information network from the identified information sources in response to the queries in accordance with the receiving protocol in the descriptive packet for the corresponding information source.